



Paving the Way for Continued CBO Involvement *Let This Be the Beginning, Not the End of Your Efforts*

On behalf of CMS and AoA, we want to recognize your efforts to educate, assist and enroll Medicare beneficiaries in the Medicare-approved drug discount card and transitional assistance programs. Thanks to you, this initiative has touched millions of beneficiaries across the country, however, there are still many more who need your help.

Your work has illustrated the value of community-based organizations as on-the-ground campaign ambassadors and is a testament to the value inherent in a grassroots, localized approach to communicating with beneficiaries. The trust that beneficiaries have placed in the community-based organizations involved in this initiative is proof of your credibility.

As partners in this initiative, we hope you have benefited from this experience, as well. You have shared examples of how to build and execute effective partnerships, how to develop creative solutions to challenging obstacles and barriers, and how to customize tools, which you have used to better serve your communities. We hope you found this experience useful and more importantly, that you will continue the work you have started as there are still many more beneficiaries who need your assistance in finding the best prescription drug program for their needs. Though your outreach efforts have helped to increase beneficiaries' awareness about the drug discount card program, there are still millions of seniors and disabled Americans who need your help. We encourage you to continue this forward momentum. Your organizations have been and will continue to be critical avenues for increasing the awareness among beneficiaries about the Medicare prescription drug program.

From the onset of this endeavor, your organizations have focused on three areas: identifying target beneficiary audiences, managing organizational resources and staff effectively, and reaching objectives and goals. Your organizations were selected based on your experience in these areas and your ability to create a realizable work plan that would achieve all three. We look forward to learning and benefiting from your experiences that you will share with us through your final reports!

In this issue of *Covering America*, we offer information about your final report requirements as well as the new poverty limit guidelines. In addition, we spotlight SeniorsPlus as our Organization of the Week and share with you the latest reported outreach/education, assistance and enrollment numbers as of February 21, 2005.

BI-WEEKLY REPORT UPDATE

**Numbers Reported by CBOs
for February 21, 2005**
(Numbers from Sept. 1 through
Jan. 10, 2005)

Educated:
4,768,762 (41,218,982)

Assisted in Enrollment:
51,608 (296,515)

Enrolled in Drug Card:
13,905 (57,530)

Enrolled in Transitional
Assistance:
7,477 (22,889)

ORGANIZATION OF THE WEEK

SeniorsPlus
Lewiston, Maine

What They're Saying...

[Here's what CMS and AoA](#)

SeniorsPlus exists to help adults make informed choices about aging well and living independently and safely at home. As the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties in Maine, SeniorsPlus has been working to secure and maintain the independence of older individuals since 1972 when they were designated the AAA under the Older Americans Act. As a subcontractor for this initiative, SeniorsPlus produced a talk show-type infomercial on the Medicare-approved drug card and transitional assistance programs targeting senior beneficiaries. This infomercial explains the benefits of enrolling in the program, as well as the specifics of obtaining the additional \$600 credit, and how easy it is to enroll. According to Susan Goulet, Project Coordinator at SeniorsPlus, "The infomercial really worked. We were able to reach people who were homebound and not able to see us out in their community. The infomercial aired on 10 cable networks covering three counties. People who saw the infomercial called and asked questions about applying, and people who were 'channel surfing' saw our logo in the background and stayed tuned in to watch."

SeniorsPlus has consistently leveraged strategic media outreach in their efforts to enroll beneficiaries in the Medicare-approved drug card and transitional assistance programs. In addition to airing the infomercial on 10 cable networks, SeniorsPlus maximized the effect of their outreach by making 80 additional tapes and distributing them to libraries, nursing centers and other locations where seniors tended to frequent. SeniorsPlus sent a copy of the infomercial on video with an enrollment form to everyone who wanted one. The infomercial had a direct effect on SeniorsPlus's assistance and enrollment numbers because it prompted numerous phone inquiries and enrollment assistance calls.

SeniorsPlus recognizes the benefit of using media as a catalyst for assistance and enrollment. Their broader strategy, which also included enrollment sessions at local community sites and presentations to eligible beneficiaries, did not solely rely on the video but rather used it as a stepping-stone towards further education and assistance in enrollment. SeniorsPlus developed an innovative and creative approach, which enabled them to reach their rural and homebound target audiences.

To learn more about SeniorsPlus, e-mail Susan Goulet at sgoulet@seniorsplus.org.

CBO Recognition Program: Excellence in Enrollment

It is with great pleasure that CMS and AoA announce the names of those CBOs who have demonstrated excellence in increasing, meeting or surpassing their performance measures through innovative programming!

Individuals Doing Extraordinary Things

- Lydia Bennett, Neighborly Care Network, St. Petersburg, FL
- Pran Wahi, India Association of Western Washington, Bellevue, WA

Development & Implementation of Innovative Tools &

officials are saying about your efforts on-the-ground!

"We are very proud of the work the CBOs have done and continue to do in their communities. They are illustrating true dedication to helping Medicare beneficiaries understand the cost-saving benefits of enrolling in the Medicare-Approved drug discount card program."

- Dr. Mark McClellan
CMS Administrator

"Community-based organizations are a visible and trusted source of information and their efforts have helped to expand understanding among Medicare beneficiaries about prescription drug benefits."

- Josefina G. Carbonell
Assistant Secretary for Aging,
AoA

Resources

- Norwalk Senior Center, Norwalk CT
- New York City Department for Aging, New York, NY
- Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX
- Central Kentucky Senior Corps, Lebanon, KY

Partnership Development for Single-Contract CBOs

- Area Agency on Aging, District 7, Inc., Southern OH

REMINDER: FINAL REPORTS DUE MARCH 31st

Your final report is due to Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

NO LATER THAN MARCH 31, 2005.

You should have received the final report outline from your Ogilvy Regional Coordinator, which you are *required* to follow. Please contact your Regional Coordinator immediately if you have not yet received it.

Best of luck and we look forward to receiving, reading, and learning from your reports!

CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

New Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2005

The Federal government recently released new poverty guidelines for 2005. These guidelines are retroactively effective to January 1, 2005. Please take note of the changes because some beneficiaries, who were not previously eligible for transitional assistance based on their income level, may now be able to apply.

The poverty guidelines are issued each year in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The guidelines should be used for determining financial eligibility for certain programs including the transitional assistance credit.

Annual Guidelines

		States and DC	Alaska	Hawaii
135%	Single	\$12,919	\$16,133	\$14,864
	Married	\$17,320	\$21,641	\$19,926

Monthly Guidelines

		States and DC	Alaska	Hawaii
135%	Single	\$1,077	\$1,345	\$1,239
	Married	\$1,444	\$1,804	\$1,661

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